GEF CSO Network

Statement on Draft GEF Programming Strategy on Adaption to Climate Change on SCCF & LDCF for GEF-9

Presentation by GEF Secretariat GEF/LDCF.SCCF/02/SM2/01

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The GEF CSO Network welcomes the updated draft Programming Strategy.
It shows real progress since the last meeting, aligning the LDCF and SCCF with the Global Goal on Adaptation, the UAE Framework for Climate Resilience, and the Baku Adaptation Roadmap (pp. iii–v).

We appreciate the focus on the whole of society and locally-led adaptation, recognizing the role of communities, Indigenous Peoples, and civil society (p. 31).
We welcome the attention to fragility sensitive programming, adaptive social protection, and the integration of health and early warning systems (pp. v, 22–23, 14–16).
We also value the continued innovation and private sector engagement through the Challenge Program and the broader alignment across the GEF Family of Funds (pp. v, 27, 33, 5–6).

We particularly welcome the stronger focus on technology and innovation. Digital tools and AI can accelerate adaptation if developed in partnership with local communities and grounded in their knowledge and rights.

Now, we would not be civil society if we did not also bring a few constructive worries.

Coming to Civil society participation — we have similar concerns as Switzerland.
The Whole-of-Society cannot stay as a slogan. It needs a budget line and clear implementation mechanisms. Projects implemented by agencies should systematically include local organizations as partners and decision makers, not as guests on the sidelines (p. 31).

Country Platforms risk becoming too top down, led by finance ministries and development banks but missing the very people who make adaptation happen. We urge that civil society voices be built in from the start, both in these platforms and in the Dedicated Council Working Group (pp. 23, 46).

Private sector engagement must come with strong social and environmental safeguards, to ensure innovation serves people, not just balance sheets (pp. 27–28).
If adaptation becomes profitable but not equitable, we will have adapted the wrong thing.

We also note that over one third of LDCF and more than half of SCCF resources flow through multilateral development banks (para. 30, p. 8). That balance needs to shift, expanding collaboration with national institutions and community-based partners within agency led projects.

And of course, both funds still rely on a small circle of donors (para. 9, p. 2). Predictable and diversified contributions, consistent with the new global climate finance goal, will be essential for credibility and long-term impact (para. 7, p. 2).

Finally, we call for climate and nature education to be woven into all adaptation initiatives. It builds understanding, participation, and a green workforce for a resilient future and embeds climate adaptation into the broader society.